

RESTORING THE ARMY'S ACQUISITION CONTRACTING CORPS

BY

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USAWC STRATEGY RESEARCH PROJECT

RESTORING THE ARMY'S ACQUISITION CONTRACTING CORPS

by

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ABSTRACT

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Acquisition failures in expeditionary operations require a systemic fix of the Army Acquisition system. In 2007, the Secretary of the Army established an independent Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations to review the lessons learned in recent operations and to provide forward-looking recommendations to ensure future military operations achieve greater effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and transparency. This SRP compares Army's contracting program with the contracting programs of the Navy and Air Force. In the basis of this comparison, it offers recommendations for improving Army contracting, which has been under scrutiny for the past ten years.

RESTORING THE ARMY'S ACQUISITION CONTRACTING CORPS

This SRP compares the Army's contracting program with those of the Navy and Air Force. In the basis of comparison, it offers recommendations for improving Army contracting, which has come under scrutiny for the past ten years. Figure 1 illustrates the planning process used in the Air Force's Contracting Strategic Planning Model that promotes tactical implementation of strategic priorities.

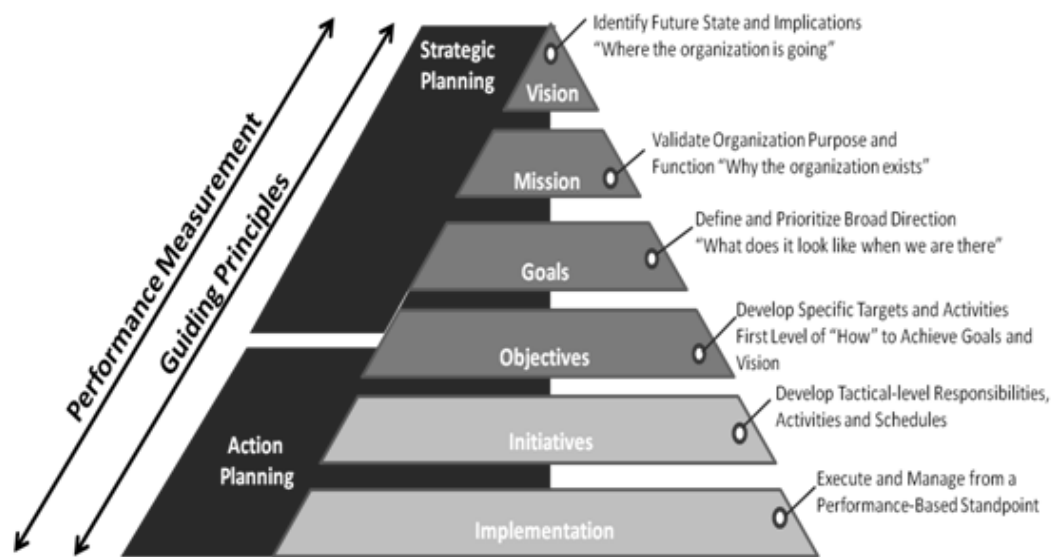


Figure 1: Air Force Strategic Model

This model could strengthen the Army's Strategic Planning process and serve as a foundation for Army contracting. It shows how contracting can be used to implement a strategy that accomplishes the organizational mission that supports its senior leaders' vision. This holistic planning model is informal though out by the organization's guiding principles; in there, it calls for assessments of performances throughout the process. The following background of Army contracting reveals the need to reform the process in accord with the latest practices in Navy and Air Force contracting.

Background

Since the Cold War terminated, the Department of Defense and the Services have made significant changes to meet the expanding challenges of contracting. A 2007 *Independent Commission on Army Contracting and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations* reviewed lessons learned in Army contracting. After reviewing the entire landscape of acquisition issues in Kuwait, Afghanistan, and Iraq, the *Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations* identified the problems that Army personnel experienced in Acquisition and Program Management in the Expeditionary Environment. The commission cited failures of several departments and agencies to recognize or comprehensively address significant, shifting challenges of the post-Cold War environment.¹

Every service has outsourced acquisition tasks previously performed by individuals in uniform, now performed by contractors. This has significantly increased their effectiveness and warfighting capabilities and has done so at significant savings to the American taxpayer. However, outsourcing has challenged the Services' acquisition and program management processes in these major areas: increased workload, increased complexity, and increased tempo.²

Increased Workload

After the Cold War struggle with the Soviet Union, the nation's defense spending declined. Accordingly, purchases of high-tech equipment occurred at a more reasonable pace. Likewise, new management processes, improved training, and better technology enabled the Services' to reduce significantly the number of individuals involved in the procurement process.³

The Army significantly reduced its acquisition workforce and deliberately chose not to shore up identified shortfalls in Army program management personnel.

Subsequently, the workload of contracting personnel (charged with writing, negotiating, monitoring, and enforcing performance of the contracts) substantially increased in complexity and volume.⁴

Increased Complexity

Acquisition and contracting have increased in complexity as well. Acquiring services is more complicated than purchasing hardware. Service contracts, those through which the Government purchases services rather than hardware, tend to be more complex. For example, Soldiers expect food to be available where they need it, when they need it, and in sufficient quantities. Soldiers do not have years to wait for teams of engineers to define their nutritional requirements. But they bring their complex needs to a contracting office. However, contractually defining warfighters' daily requirements and assuring requisite services are regularly and adequately provided are complex and very critical issues. Because the Army has outsourced its support services, neither the warfighter nor the contracting professional has the resources available to provide assured and definitive assistance.⁵

After contract award, the Army has limited human resources trained with validity to monitor and ensure the contractor is providing the services needed by the warfighter. Contracting personnel often rely on Soldiers with a specific Military Occupational Specialty (MOS) to monitor the contractor's performance; these Soldiers serve as the Contracting Officer's Representative (CORs). CORs are an essential part of contract management. They represent the "last tactical mile" of contracting⁶. However, CORs in theater are assigned as contract managers/administrators as an "extra duty." Often,

they have no experience in such matters. A COR is often a young Soldier who lacks contracting experience. But most have at least a functional area of expertise (e.g. 92G-food service handler assigned to the Dining Facility, etc.). The Army's inability to monitor contractor performance and enforce contracts is a critical problem in an expeditionary environment. "The Commission reported that the complexity of drafting service contracts and monitoring them, and the critical need for resources to perform these functions in an expeditionary environment, have not received the needed attention from the Army."⁷

Increased Tempo

The biggest challenge of peacetime acquisition operations in the continental United States (CONUS) or long-established bases outside the continental U.S. (OCONUS) is to sustain the accelerated operations tempo. In an expeditionary environment, personnel must fill requirements in days---not months. Further, the volumes of requirements can easily overwhelm a small contracting office.⁸

Because of the huge workload, the increased complexity of service contracts, and the rapid operational tempo, there has been a dramatic reduction in the capability of the Army to meet the acquisitions. This combination represents a "perfect storm" in Army acquisition and program management.⁹

Army Acquisition Management

In 2001, the Center for Naval Analysis (CNA) conducted an extensive analysis of the Army's acquisition management process. CNA found that the Army significantly lagged behind the other Services (Air Force and Navy) in such key areas as leadership focus on acquisition, funding, budgeting, and requirements generation. Similarly, this afore-mentioned Independent commission reported that since late 1999 the Army has

been struggling with many of the same challenges cited by CNA, both in peacetime and during expeditionary operations. Current research and recent discussions with senior Army, Air Force, and Navy, personnel affirm that Army contracting is struggling to develop and execute responsive strategies to support the Army's global mission. The Commission made four specific recommendations for improving Army contracting:¹⁰

- Increase the stature, quantity, and career development of military and civilian contracting personnel (especially for expeditionary contracting operations),
- Restructure the organization and restore responsibility to facilitate contracting and contract management in expeditionary and continental U.S. (CONUS) operations,
- Provide training and tools for overall contracting activities in expeditionary operations and,
- Obtain legislative, regulatory, and policy assistance to enable contracting effectiveness in expeditionary operations.¹¹

Overall, the Commission provided 40 specific recommendations, 18 of which affected the entire Department. The DoD Task Force for Contracting and Contract Management on Expeditionary Operations was responsible for implementation of these 18 recommendations. The remaining 22 recommendations addressed Army issues beyond the purview of contracting. Accordingly, the Task Force oversaw the evaluation and implementation of the remaining 22 recommendations in compliance with Section 849 of the National Defense Authorizations Act for Fiscal Year 2008 (FY 2008 NDAA). Paragraph (b) (2) of Section 849 directed the Secretary of the Army to evaluate the Commissions' recommendations and report the Army's conclusions and implementation

plans.¹² The Army Task Force attempted to implement the 22 recommendations to fix the Army's contracting challenges. They failed to conduct a holistic strategic review and propose an Army model similar to that of the Air Force.

This SRP compares the Air Force's and Navy's Contracting Strategic Plans with the Army's Plan. It focuses on the much-needed increase of Army stature, quantity, multifunctional acquisition track, growing demand for expeditionary contracting support, and career development of military officers and non-commissioned contracting personnel to repair the Army's image and meet challenges in the Acquisition Contracting career field. This SRP recommends whether the Army should adopt some of the goals and contracting guiding principles of its sister Services.

Army's Mission in Contracting

The Army needs to implement a holistic Strategic Contracting Plan. The current acquisition mission acknowledges the model of "excellence in procurement" by providing innovative policies and business practices to ensure mission accomplishment. The Army carries out its contracting mission by developing, disseminating, and ensuring the execution of Army policy for procurement and related business practices. This mission includes the professional development of the contracting workforce. The Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army Procurement (DASA (P)) also acts as the Functional Chief Representative for Contracting. This individual is responsible for leading and managing the recruitment, retention, education, and training of the contracting community. This area in particular has taken an extensive hit over the years for failing to develop strategic guidance and failure to organize the acquisition workforce effectively. My research included an opportunity to sit down and discuss some strategic contracting issues with two senior personnel in the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army for

Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology (OASA (ALT)). These individuals are responsible for the contracting career field, but on different levels. Discussions with senior ASA (ALT) personnel took place on November 2-3, 2010. On 2 November 2010, I sat down with one of the senior personnel within DASA-(P), the agency responsible to the Army's leadership for the management, measurement, oversight, and continuous improvement of the procurement's mission. Our question and answer session follows:

- **Questions:** With Army Contracting, what went wrong and what is the Army doing to restore the contracting career field?
- **Answer:** The Army's goal for this year is to codify some of the "best practices" in this area. We are adding 400 military personnel to the contracting community. We are using the Boot Camp model, which entails a 6-8 week camp that educates and trains interns and journey-level personnel entering the Contracting career field.¹³
- **Question:** Does the Army have a Contracting Strategic Plan, and if so, what does it look like? If not, what are the plans for developing one and the timeline?
- **Answer:** Currently, we are strapped for personnel; we just do not have the staff to develop this high-level plan. Once we get additional personnel on board, with the expertise, we will develop this plan. There is no due date at this time.¹⁴
- **Questions:** What are the goals and guiding principles for Army Contracting?
- **Answer:** We are implementing a Contracting curriculum into Senior Service Colleges/Schools. One of our military officers, recently on board, has the task

to develop the curriculum consisting of a three-day General Officers (GO) /Senior Executive Service (SES) course.¹⁵

- **Question:** What is the Army's Strategic Planning Approach to contracting?
- **Answer:** We do not have the manpower or staff to track training in every command. Our vision and improvements will be laid out in future Contracting Strategic Plan.¹⁶

United States Army Acquisition Support Center

The USAASC is responsible for managing and executing the Army's Contracting and Acquisition Career Program (CP-14) functions on behalf of the Functional Chief (the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology) On 3 November 2010, I had open discussions with a senior official in the office of the United States Army Acquisition Support Center (USAASC). This individual is responsible for managing the Army Contracting and Acquisition Career Program (CP-14). USASC provides a comprehensive career management framework for over 5,000 contracting and acquisition professionals. During our discussion, we talked primarily about the program methodology for employing and deploying military personnel. On 13 December 2006, the Army approved the MOS 51C career field for enlisted soldiers. The Army's G1 office is currently managing the 51C officer and NCO projections authorization for the out years.¹⁷ After discussions with senior level personnel in both offices, I inquired about the Army's Contracting Strategic Plan for the next five years. Neither organization could offer a long-term view on improving the acquisition practices and/or processes. Therefore, it appears that senior contracting leadership has not attempted to bring their wisdom and/or experiences to the table to plot a course for developing an Army

Contracting Strategic Plan within the next 5 years. The Air Force and Navy developed their Contracting Strategic Plan their workforce approximately four years ago. Senior Army personnel from DASA-P should leverage key Air Force and Navy core competencies with input and assistance from senior contracting leaders of the Army's sister service.

For the Army, the Contracting community, as well as for American taxpayers; this resulting return on mission will far out-weigh the embarrassment they have sustained over the past ten years. Adopting an Army Strategic Plan similar to those of our sister services, will proactively engage Army leaders at every level. This initiative could propel Army contracting to meet their objectives and to realize the full potential of their leaders' vision.

Variations of Contracting Practices and Models among the Three Services

This section discusses variations of contracting practices and models of each of the three services. The variations begin at the Strategic Level at which the senior Contracting official for each service provide the guiding principles that lay a foundation for success. The comparison proceeded to the tactical and operational levels, focusing on the training and experiences of each Service.

Air Force Model

The Air Force has long surpassed the Army and Navy in Acquisition Contract Management. They have continued to operate in a dynamic and ever-changing environment at the strategic level. Roger S. Correll, Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Air Force for Contracting, indicates that one of their successes in contracting is "cultivating a culture of competence and courage by going back to the basics, from reaffirming their core values of *Integrity First, Service Before Self, and Excellence in*

Everything we do, to embracing efforts to improve processes and leveraging technology.” Back to basics begins with developing Air Force personnel early on in their contracting career, both officers and enlisted personnel.¹⁸

The Air Force has Career Developing Models for Officers, Enlisted, and Civilian personnel. The Enlisted Contracting Career Development Model exemplifies differences among the Services. The Air Force developed a Career Field Education and Training Plan (CFETP) that lays out a clear comprehensive education and training plan for enlisted contracting personnel. It identifies life-cycle requirements for their contracting career field. The CFETP enables enlisted Airmen in the contracting community to undergo the training and education necessary for a clear path to success. “The CFETP provides supervisors the guidance needed to train today’s workforce for tomorrow’s careers.” This guidance ensures that individuals in the contracting specialty receive effective and efficient training at the appropriate milestone in their career. “The Air Force Career Functional Manager (AFCFM) at SAF/AQC approves and maintains the CFETP. SAF/AQC is the office of coordinating responsibility for the establishment of training policy to support the entire contracting career field.” AFCFM monitors the progress of contracting training course development (entry, transition and supplemental) to eliminate roadblocks that may prevent timely course development. They review documents annually to ensure accuracy and relevancy. If changes are required, they forward them to the AFCFM SAF/AQC office.¹⁹

The CFETP consists of two parts: Part 1 provides information for the overall management of the specialty. It describes how all Airmen will utilize the plan and explains their duties along the career field path. It associates each level with specialty

qualifications so contracting personnel can identify resource constraints. Part 2 includes the Specialty Training Standard (STS) that describes duties, tasks, and technical references to support training. It identifies formal school information and references to the Acquisition Professional Development Program (APDP) contracting career path. Finally, it details the MAJCOM process for submission of mandatory training requirement waivers. Figure 2 illustrates the Contracting Career path for Enlisted Airmen from the tactical level to the strategic level.²⁰

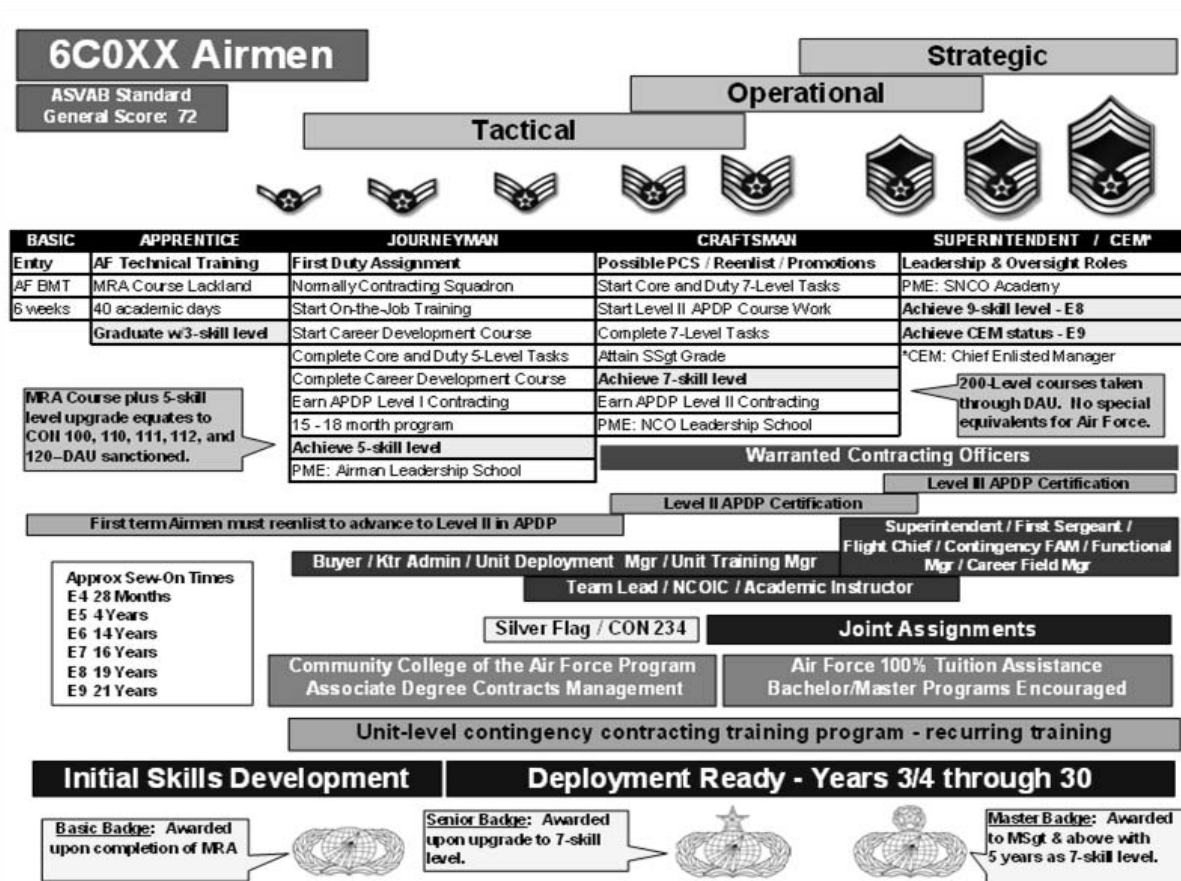


Figure 2: Air Force Contracting Enlisted Career Path²¹

Navy Model

In 1989, the Navy Supply Corps provided its first strategic vision document, The Supply Corps 2010 Study. As Navy contracting personnel entered the targeted years of

the original study, they released their second comprehensive strategic planning effort: “The Supply Corps 2040 Strategic Vision Study.” In a statement released on 21 March 2010, Rear Admiral Michael J. Lyden, Commander, Naval Supply Systems Command, Chief of Supply Corps, explained, “The timeframe for 2040 is purposeful; today, the Supply Corps is accessing and training the senior leadership of the Corps.” The study provides both a near-term focus and a forward-looking perspective for the Corps. “It drives immediate actions that help shape the Supply Corps across the Future Years Defense Program while simultaneously looking over the horizon to ensure that we are taking actions now that optimally position the Corps for future success.” The Supply Corps 2040 Strategic Vision clearly represents a comprehensive effort to instill enduring traits that will provide the Navy’s Supply Corps with a competitive advantage.²²

The Navy’s contracting program falls under the Navy Supply Corps School (NSCS). There are no enlisted contracting personnel within the Corps. Commissioned Navy officers enter the Supply Corps before their first operational assignment. They train as Supply Corps Officers afloat and ashore to successfully perform in a variety of functions under a myriad of conditions that brings credit to themselves and to the Navy Supply Corps. Completion of the Acquisition Contract Management curriculum qualifies Naval officers as Acquisition and Contract Management sub-specialists. Supply Officers expand their skill sets in an operational environment. The Acquisition and Contract Management curriculum is an interdisciplinary program designed to provide officers with skills necessary to support their system’s buying offices, field contracting offices, contract administration offices and contracting policy offices. The Navy’s model consists of three phases: Junior Officer (JO) Basic Technical Development and Leadership,

Advanced Technical Proficiency and Leadership, and Senior Officer Development and Leadership. Their training begins at the officers' accession and continues throughout their careers, with each stage building upon the previous one, always reinforcing key Supply Corps competencies and values. Figure 3 illustrates how each stage incorporates various facets of training, education, and career experiences used to create the current training model.²³

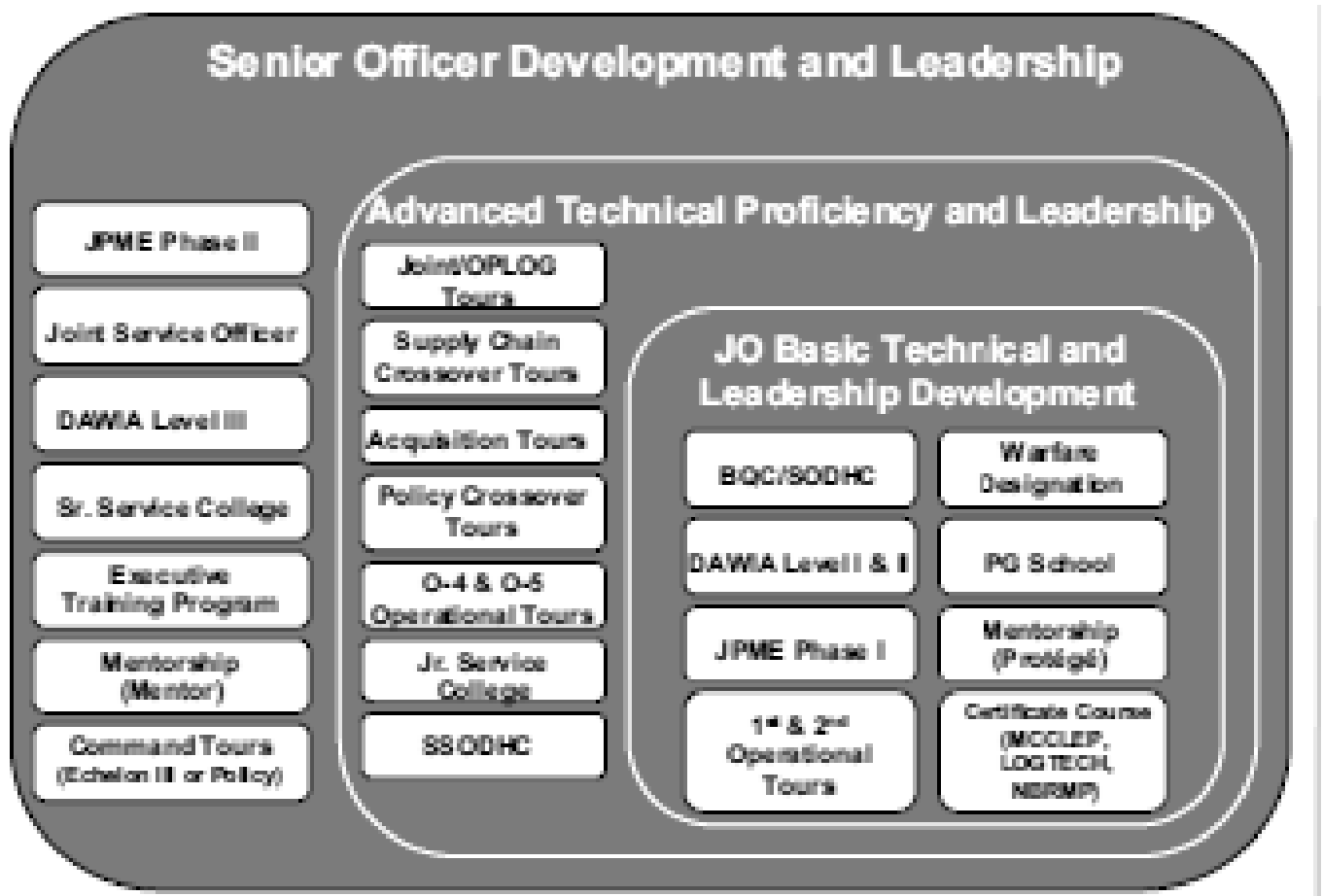


Figure 3: Navy Supply Corps Continuum of Education²⁴

Shortly after completion of their initial tours, junior Supply Corps officers begin their developmental education during their first shore tour, usually serving as intern or recipients of on-the-job training. These programs provide excellent opportunities for JOs

to develop skills and gain exposure to policy and development, as they receive on-the-job training in a functional subspecialty. Figure 4 depicts Supply Corps internship opportunities in fiscal year 1998-2009. The number of these opportunities has risen from 39 in 1998 to 80 in 2009, while the number of contracting internships increased from 21 to 30 positions.²⁵

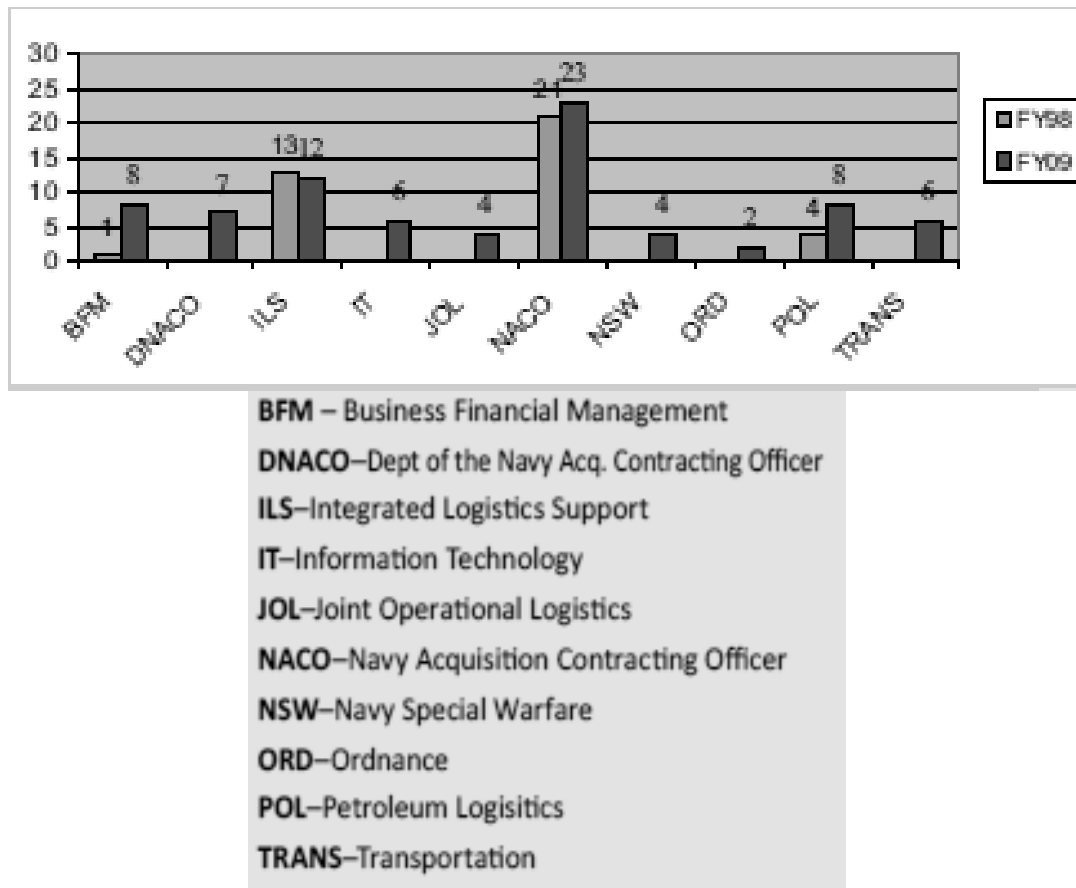


Figure 4: Navy Supply Corps Internship Opportunities²⁶

Army Model

The senior procurement official for the Army, Mr. Lee Thompson, acting Deputy Assistant Secretary of the Army (Procurement) (DASA-(P)) declares, he will “model excellence in procurement by providing innovative policies and business practices, while ensuring mission accomplishment in the Contracting Corps.” He goes on to

explain, “we will accomplish this by providing innovative and flexible policies, allowing rapid contracting for weapon systems and services to meet the warfighter’s needs.”

According to Thompson, the Army’s goal is to recruit and hire highly qualified personnel, retain them in the workforce and empower an innovative, professional contracting workforce to provide timely and sound procurement advice to Army and DoD.²⁷

The Army’s contracting career path has fallen approximately ten years behind the Air Force’s career development for officers and non-commissioned officers. Figure 5 depicts the Army’s Career Path for contracting personnel.

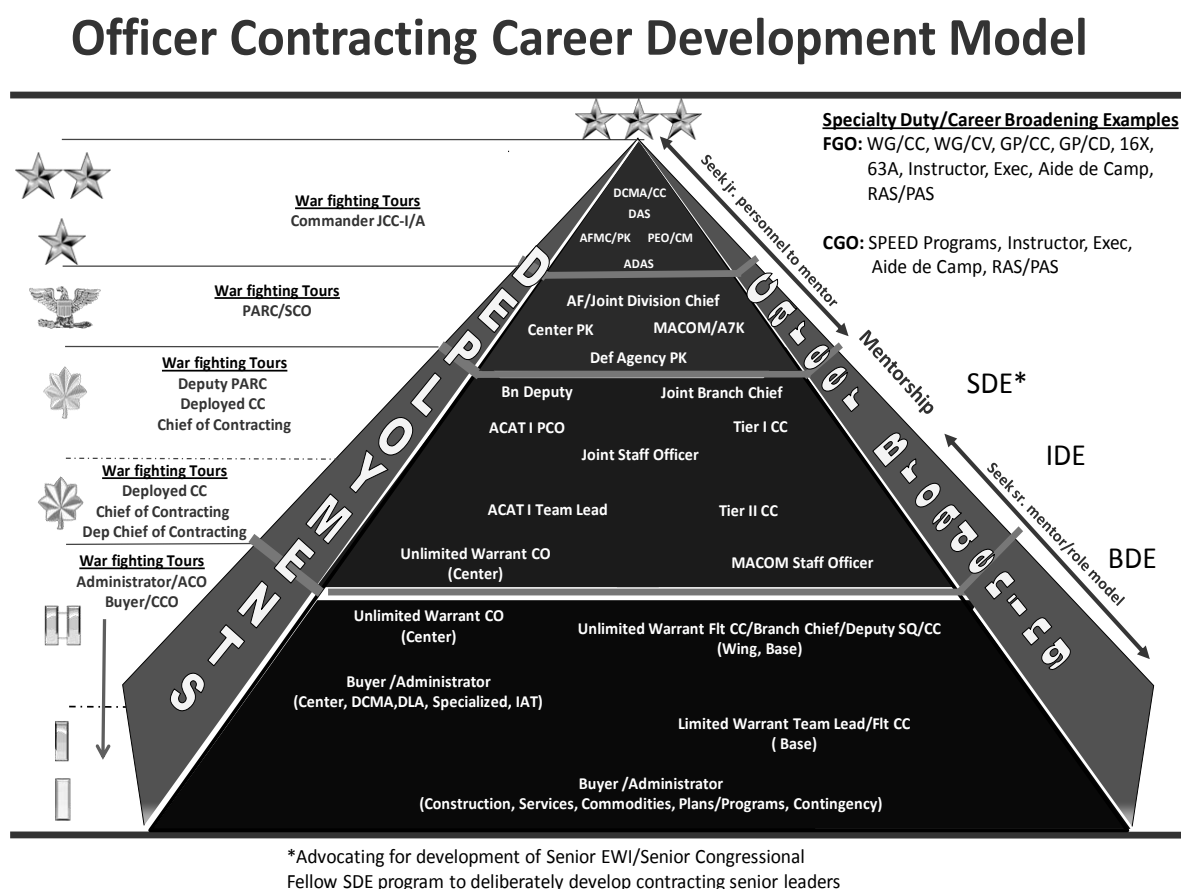


Figure 5: Army Officer Career Development Model²⁸

There are approximately 1200 officers and 243 51C NCOs in the contracting career field. Projections for FY11-15 are as follows:

- FY11: officers: (343), NCOs (276)
- FY12: officers: (347), NCOs (771)
- FY13: officers: (347), NCOs (793)
- FY14: officers: (345), NCOs (791)
- FY15: officers: (345), NCOs (791)

Army G-1 and the Human Resource Command (HRC) personnel officials are working to fulfill these projections. USAASC personnel are unaware of a plan beyond FY15.²⁹

The Army's contracting community faces some major contracting challenges. I will focus on three of their challenges: Readiness, Officer Management (multi-functional acquisition track vice a single track), and Competency. The first is the overall readiness level reported in the Expeditionary Contracting Command, coded as C4, which means the command's core functions, contracting, lacks the necessary training for deployment of their personnel. They are not fully equipped to execute contracting missions in a contingency environment, let alone in a garrison office.

Second is the issue of training officers along a multi-functional track or a single-track. Extensive research and discussions with the senior personnel in ASA (ALT), Army Material Command (AMC), Navy Supply Corps, and the Air Force Contracting Office (SAF/AQC), indicates that the Army's ASA (ALT) leaders should strongly consider selecting and training Officers and NCOs early in their careers. This would enable the Army to start grooming young Soldiers early in their careers and assure that

the Contracting Corps has experienced leaders. This would also provide the technical expertise, stability, and growth within the Acquisition Contracting Corps, much like in other branches in the Army (i.e. Adjutant General Corps, Infantry, and Field Artillery). The Army needs contracting Soldiers who possess technical capabilities appropriate to the Contracting Corps.

The final issue is that of Army contracting personnel competency that resides in skills, knowledge, and behavior. Our military personnel bounce from operational to technical assignments at the captain and major (CPT-MAJ) grades for a short period. Then they proceed to serve as multifunctional lieutenant colonels and colonels (LTC-COL). But they do not totally understand the full spectrum of Contracting. The Army can leverage some great practices from the Air Force. This would not be the first time the Army has borrowed an idea from another service. This would set a new beginning for the Army and get us back on track for restoring the Acquisition Contracting Corps. In addition, the ASA (ALT) must work closely with Army G-1 and HRC to identify the recruitment and retention tools to retain contracting Soldiers for full Army careers.

The Report of the Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations concluded, "One of the challenges that the Army must overcome is with military Contracting personnel. Both officers and non-commissioned officers need to start their contracting career much earlier than they currently do. The value of company-level operational experiences has been seen a significant strength of Army military contracting personnel. However, entering the contracting field as a field grade officer or senior NCO with limited contracting skills and experience does a terrible

disservice to the Army and the image of Army contracting.”³⁰ This was echoed in an e-mail on December 8, 2010, from one of the Air Force’s senior contracting experts,

Level III, Contracting Corps CMSgt Matthew Josefowicz, Functional Manager, HQ, USAFE/A7K, Ramstein AB, Germany. He recently returned from a six-month deployment in Iraq as the command senior enlisted advisor. He worked alongside the Senior Commander for the Joint Contracting Command Iraq/Afghanistan (JCCI/A) BG William Phillips, now LTG Phillips, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Acquisition Logistics and Technology, OASA(ALT) Military Deputy. CMSgt Josefowicz offered some recommendations to the Army’s Contracting Corps: Adopt some of the best practices and models that have been successful in the Air Force. Following is a summary of “Chief J’s recommendations regarding Education, Training, and Personnel:

Education. The Air Force enlisted contracting personnel must achieve a 72 in the ‘General’ area of the Armed Services Vocational Aptitude Battery (ASVAB). The ASVAB is used to determine qualification for enlistments and career field placement in the United States Armed Forces. The Air Force’s Composite Score includes a Verbal Expressions and Arithmetic Reasoning (AR). To enter Air Force Contracting career field enlisted Airmen (AFSC 6C0X1) must have a minimum score 72 in the ‘General’ category. In addition, when they enter the career field as a re-trainee, they must complete a written questionnaire to determine their writing capabilities, engage in an extensive interview process, and be recommended by their supervisor and unit commander, along with a final recommendation from the local contracting office’s senior enlisted advisor. The Army should develop programs much like its sister service and establish a progressive skill level program for enlisted Soldiers. This would enable the

contracting corps to access the Soldiers skill sets, and provide a measure of their qualifications.

Training. The Army needs a training program that provides a validation and verification process for Soldiers after they have completed their initial contracting courses. This training program will serve as a refresher course for ensuring that their MOS skills are current and that they are ready to perform critical contracting missions.

The Army should provide standardized training for initial entry into the contracting corps, similar to the Air Force Contracting Mission Ready Airman Course (MRAC) and Mission Ready Officer Course (MROC) for all new personnel. This program should include enlisted, officers, and civilians. This training must be comprehensive to enable all participants to follow basic acquisition guidelines and perform basic simplified acquisitions upon arriving at duty station. Follow-on training should occur monthly as professional development. Training topics can be selected from deficiencies identified during monthly self-inspections, developed across the organization's enterprise. This program will ensure compliance within appropriate policies and procedures. It will aid in identifying weaknesses within the organization.

Personnel. The Army should continue to develop its Contracting Corps for enlisted, officers, and civilians. The Army should request contracting personnel in the grades of E4, E5, and E6 to ensure they are developing technical experts at all echelons. It should avoid acquiring too many senior NCOs who may not focus so much on learning contracting as their leadership development. This would be the same for officers and civilians. Bring them into the career field early on; do not wait until they are senior captains and/or majors. Army contracting officers are currently 8 to 10 years

behind their Air Force counterparts. The 2007 commission make a similar recommendation. In addition, the Army should provide contracting personnel with as much in-garrison experience and training. They should not execute their first contracts on a battlefield. Army contracting personnel need to build technical capabilities before they deploy. In recent conflicts, many of the Officers and NCOs were simply unaware of the technical expertise needed to perform basic contingency contracting. Finally, Chief J advised that the Army “should establish a deployment process that allows the leadership to track the availability of each and every Contingency Contracting officer. From where I sat, it took many months to track down an Army contracting person[nel] into theater.”³¹

Hard Skills and Soft Skills

Military training provides both hard and soft skills. Hard skills include technical capabilities which are directly applicable to specific tasks such as defining operational requirements; contracting and contract management; understanding doctrine, regulations and processes. John McPeck (1994) describes hard skills as “knowledge based” because of limits in their general range of applicability due to the mental activity required in accomplishing the task. Studies have found that these types of vocational skills tend to degrade over time without frequent use or needed additional education in part, because of exogenous changes. Soft skills, on the other hand, are not explicitly taught during education; rather, they are competencies gained through the process of being educated. Some refer to acquisition as soft skills “learning to learn.” These types of skills include ethical behaviors, critical thinking, communication, and leadership. “While soft skills are less tangible, they help individuals’ select pertinent information for

the solution of a problem and formulate relevant and promising hypotheses.”³² Table 1 compares Acquisition Contracting Hard and Soft skills.

Human Capital: Hard Skills	Human Capital: Soft Skills
<u>Skills</u>	
Contracting	Communications
Contracting Management	Critical Thinking
Define Requirements	Ethical Behavior
Understanding doctrine	Leadership
<u>Skills attribute</u>	
Knowledge based	Process based
Degrade over time without use	Increase with experience
Easier to define, measure, and test	Difficult to define, measure, and test
Technical degrees offer specific gains	All degree curricula offer gains

Table 1: Hard Skills vs. Soft Skills

Research has not fully disclosed how education contributes to the development of skills.³³

Comparison of Career Education and Competency Development

The Defense Acquisition University (DAU) is the principal resource for providing all DoD personnel with acquisition-related training and on-going acquisition education. DAU provides core certification and sets training standards for all Services. DAU offers courses in three distinct ways: First, the residence and distance learning courses vary in lengths designed to meet the services’ core certification standards, along with specific assignments for developmental needs. Second, the continuous learning center is the

gateway to various learning assets supported by DAU, to include information on DoD policy and guidance for the defense acquisition workforce's continuous learning requirements. Finally, in on-site courses the DAU faculty meets with services' representatives to determine their requirements. Then the DAU faculty customizes DAU learning assets to meet the needs of the service (customer). These are fee-for-service courses.

Criteria for Acquisition Certification

Level II Certification Guide	
Type of Assignment	Representative Activities
1 - Operational Contracting	▸ Contracting functions in support of post, camp or stations
2 - Res & Dev	▸ Contracting functions in support of research and development
3 - Sys Acq	▸ Contracting functions in support of systems acquisition to include all ACAT programs
4 - Logistics and Sustainment	▸ Contracting functions performed by the Defense Logistics Agency or by other offices to sustain weapon systems
5 - Construction/A&E	▸ Contracting functions in support of construction and/or architect and engineering services
6 - Contingency/Combat Ops	▸ Contracting functions performed in a contingency or combat environment
7 - Contract Admin Office	▸ Contracting function is primarily focused on contract administration
8 - Contract Cost/Price Analyst	▸ Contracting function is primarily focused on advanced cost/price analysis
9 - Small Bus Specialist	▸ Contracting function is primarily focused on advising small businesses or on strategies for maximizing use of small businesses
10 - Other	▸ Contracting functions that perform a variety of assignments or are at a headquarters, secretariat, or OSD

Core Certification Standards (Required for DAWIA certification.)	
Acquisition Training	▸ ACQ 101 Fundamentals of Systems Acquisition Management
Functional Training	▸ CON 214 Business Decisions for Contracting ▸ CON 215 Intermediate Contracting for Mission Support (R) ▸ CON 216 Legal Considerations in Contracting ▸ CON 217 Cost Analysis and Negotiation Techniques (R) ▸ CON 218 Advanced Contracting for Mission Support (R)
Education	▸ At least 24 semester hours in accounting, law, business, finance, contracts, purchasing, economics, industrial management, marketing, quantitative methods, or organization and management ▸ Baccalaureate degree (Any Field of Study)
Experience	▸ 2 years of contracting experience.

Table 2: Level II DAWIA Criteria for Certification³⁴

Table 2 depicts DAU Level II criteria for acquisition contracting professions. It specifies the types of assignments and activities a contracting workforce professional (officer, enlisted or civilian) may receive. Core certification standard itemizes the training, education, and experience required for certification for all acquisition contracting DoD personnel.³⁵

Recommendations

The research and analysis of this SRP supports the following recommendations::

1. Develop Five-year Army Strategic Contracting Plan. This would set the foundation for Army contracting to build upon. It would facilitate strategic implementation of the Army's vision and mission, linked by principles and metrics and measures within a holistic framework.

2. Work closely with Army G-1 to select a reasonable number of 51C officers and non-commissioned officers early in their careers in order to maintain and sustain the technical expertise, stability, and longevity in the Acquisition career field of contracting. Work with the Army's Operations Research and Systems Analysis (ORSA) field to assist in applying objective, analytical, and orderly thinking to the implementation of this effort.

3. Commission an independent organization (such as RAND or BENS) to periodically (every five to seven years) reviews the Acquisition community's business practices, models, policy and procedures. Such reviews would assure the integrity and competency of this vital organization. They would also enhance the image of an organization that has not enjoyed a very formidable reputation.

4. Employ DAU to customize learning courses to meet the needs of the Contracting Corps.

Endnotes

¹ Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting Report of the “Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations”, Oct 2007, 13

² Ibid.

³ Ibid., 14

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Ibid., 16

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ Ibid.

⁸ Ibid.

⁹ Ibid.

¹⁰ Center for Naval analysis, The Army Acquisition Management Study: Congressional Mandate for Change, May 2001.

¹¹ Ibid.

¹² Ibid.

¹³ Interview was confidential; the name of interviewee is withheld by mutual agreement Office of the Assistance Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology-Procurement, December 2, 2010.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ United States Army Acquisition Support Center Home Page, <http://www.asc.army.mil> (assessed December 5, 2010).

¹⁸ U.S. Department of the Air Force, SAF/AQC, Air Force Contracting Strategic Plan, 2009-2013, i.

¹⁹ U.S. Department of the Air Force, Secretary of the Air Force. SAF/AQCX (Acquisition), Career Education and Training Plan, Contracting, email sent December 20, 2010.

²⁰ Ibid., 24

²¹ Ibid., 30

²² U.S. Department of the Navy, the Supply Corps 2040 Strategic Vision Study Commander's Guidance 2011 and the Strategic Business Plan, NAVSUP, 2010.

²³ Ibid., 71-104

²⁴ Ibid., 105

²⁵ Ibid., 106

²⁶ Ibid., 107

²⁷ The Office of the Assistance Secretary of the Army for Acquisition, Logistics, and Technology Home Page (Procurement), <http://www.alt.army.mil> (assessed December 10, 2010).

²⁸ Army Officer Career Development Model, provided by Mr. Bryan Sampson Expeditionary Contracting Command, December 20, 2010.

²⁹ LTC Ellsworth Johnson, FA, 51C Proponent Officer, United States Army Acquisition Support Center, email message to author, December 6, 2010.

³⁰ Urgent Reform Required: Army Expeditionary Contracting Report of the "Commission on Army Acquisition and Program Management in Expeditionary Operations", Oct 2007,

³¹ CMSgt Matthew Josefowicz, Functional Manager, USAFE Contracting, HQ, USAFE, Ramstein AB, Germany, e-mail message to author, November 20, 2010. DoD Level III, Contracting Corps. Referred by: LTG Phillips, the Office of the Assistant Secretary of the Army, Acquisition Logistics and Technology, OASA(ALT) Military Deputy.

³² McPeck, John E., "Critical Thinking and the 'Trivial Pursuits' theory of Knowledge" in Kerry S. Walters, ed., Re-Thinking Reason New Perspectives in Critical Thinking, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1994, pp. 101-117

³³ Ibid.

³⁴ Ibid.

³⁵ Defense Acquisition University, iCatalog, <http://www.dau.mil>, (accessed December 11, 2010).

